

Message Text

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USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
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FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: FAO, UN
SUBJECT: GENEVA GROUP IN ROME FOLLOW-UP TO CONSULTATIVE LEVEL
MEETING

FOLLOWING IS REPORT TO GENEVA GROUP GENERAL CO-CHAIRMAN DRAFTED BY
UK CO-CHAIRMAN IN ROME ALEXANDER LANDYMORE, AND CONCURRED IN BY U.S.
CO-CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER NORRED. LANDYMORE IS SENDING REPORT TO
UK CO-CHAIRMAN OF GENEVA GROUP GENERAL.

QUOTE: GENEVA GROUP: FOLLOW-UP TO CONSULTATIVE LEVEL MEETING

WE HAVE CONSIDERED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHAIRMEN OF OUR TWO
WORKING GROUPS ON FAO FINANCE AND FAO PROGRAMMES, THE FOLLOWING
QUESTIONS:-

I. A DATE FOR SUGGESTING TO THE FAO MANAGEMENT AN INDICATIVE
TARGET FIGURE FOR THE FAO BUDGET 1980-81.

II. THE ANALYSIS OF FAO'S TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES,
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AND THE QUESTION WHETHER THESE COULD OR COULD NOT BE MORE SUITABLY
CARRIED OUT BY UNDP.

III. THE "CANADIAN PAPER" ON METHODS FOR DETERMINING AND APPRO-
PRIATE BUDGET LEVEL AND THE APPLICABILITY OF THESE METHODS TO THE
ANALYSIS OF THE FAO PIKME OF WORK AND BUDGET (PWB), INCLUD-
ING THE SUGGESTION THAT THIS MIGHT BE DISCUSSED WITH THE APPROPRIATE

FAO OFFICIALS.

I. TIMING OF LAUNCHING AN INDICATIVE TARGET FIGURE FOR FAO
BUDGET 1980-81.

FAO IS CURRENTLY NEARING THE END OF ITS BUDGET PREPARATION CYCLE FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM 1978-79. THE FAO COUNCIL HAS ALREADY CONSIDERED THE MAIN CHANGES PROPOSED AND THE DETAILED PWB WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE FAO GENERAL CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER 1977. TO INJECT A TARGET FIGURE FOR 1980-81 INTO THIS PROCESS IN THE COMING AUTUMN WOULD CONFUSE ISSUES AND DEFEAT ITS OWN ENDS. WE CONSIDER THAT ACTION SHOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL THE EARLY SPRING OF 1978. THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL IS REQUIRED TO PRODUCE HIS OWN INDICATIVE FIGURE AT THE SESSION OF THE FAO COUNCIL TAKING PLACE IN THE AUTUMN OF THE FIRST YEAR OF THE BIENNIUM. THERE WOULD THUS BE A 6 MONTHS GESTATION PERIOD.

II. TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

ON THE ANALYSIS OF FAO TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES OUR WORKING GROUP ON FAO PROGRAMMES HAS COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS:

"THE MORE GENERAL QUESTION RAISED BY THE GROUP CONSULTATIVE LEVEL MEETING IN GENEVA, VIZ TO EXAMINE THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES OF THE FOUR MAJOR UN AGENCIES (A.O. FAO) IS DIFFICULT TO TACKLE IN VIEW OF THE LACK OF PRECISION IN DEFINITION. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT ASKS FOR AN EXAMINATION OF THE PROGRAMMES WHICH MIGHT BE DEFINED AS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION.

"IN SOME WAYS ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT FAO IS ENGAGED IN IS TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION - EVEN SOME OF THE MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES. THE MORE COMMON DEFINITION WITH RESPECT TO FAO IS HEADQUARTERS VERSUS FIELD PROGRAMMES, BUT THIS NOT ONLY IS AN ARBITRARY DELINEATION BUT IS ONE WHICH PROBABLY HAS RESULTED FROM FUNDING PRACTICES RATHER MORE THAN HAVING BEEN THE CAUSE. WHO CAN SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT FAO'S FIELD PROGRAMME WOULD HAVE BEEN BY NOW WERE IT NOT FOR THE ADVENT OF UNDP AND ITS PREDECESSORS? SURELY FAO WOULD HAVE HAD FIELD ACTIVITIES ANYWAY, AND SURELY A LARGE PART OF HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICE ACTIVITY WOULD HAVE BEEN 'TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION'.

"MORE SIGNIFICANT, PERHAPS, IS THAT AN EXAMINATION OF FIELD ACTIVITIES DOES NOT INDICATE THAT THEY EXIST INDEPENDENT OF HEADQUARTERS, NOR CAN THEY BE DEFINED AS 'THE' TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION INPUT.

"IN SHORT, 'TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION' APPEARS TO BE NEITHER A VERY USEFUL CONCEPT NOR AN EASILY MEASURED ONE IN THE FAO CONTEXT. AN ANALYSIS UNDER THAT HEADING COULD BE CONDUCTED BUT IT WOULD BE A RATHER LABORIOUS PROCESS IF IT WERE TO INVOLVE REGULAR BUDGET AND TRUST FUNDS AS WELL AS TCP ACTIVITIES AND THE SEPARATE FUNDING FOR COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING THEIR CONSULTANT FUNDS. THEREFORE, BEFORE UNDERTAKING SUCH A TASK WE SHOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM THE CONSULTATIVE LEVEL AS TO JUST WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND."

IN OUR VIEW, TO ACHIEVE A DEFINITION THERE ARE VARIOUS TESTS WHICH MIGHT BE APPLIED, ALTHOUGH NONE IS CONCLUSIVE. ONE IS THAT A TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS A CLEARLY IDENTIFIED ACTIVITY WITH A DEFINITE TERM. ANOTHER IS THAT TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION IS DISTINCT FROM THE NORMATIVE ACTIVITIES. A THIRD DISTINCTION IS THAT A TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITY IS CARRIED OUT ON BEHALF OF AN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY OR GROUP OF COUNTRIES WHEREAS GLOBAL ACTION OF A TECHNICAL NATURE IS PART OF THE NORMAL FUNCTIONS OF AN AGENCY.

HOWEVER, PERHAPS IN THE CASE OF FAO THE ORGANIZATION HAS ALREADY LARGELY ANSWERED THE ANALYTICAL PART OF THE QUESTION IN ITS REPORT TO ECOSOC AT ITS 63RD SESSION FOR THE YEAR 1976 (DOC E/5940 OF 26 APRIL 1977). THE VERY INFORMATIVE TABLE I ON PAGE 32 OF THAT DOCUMENT BREAKS DOWN FAO EXPENDITURES ON REGULAR AND FIELD PROGRAMMES AND PROVIDES A USEFUL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING THE VARIOUS POINTS AT ISSUE. ASSISTED BY ITS WORKING GROUP ON FAO PROGRAMMES, THE GENEVA GROUP (ROME) WILL CONTINUE WORK ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ANY OF THESE PROGRAMMES OR COMPONENTS OF THE REGULAR PROGRAMME, WOULD BE MORE SUITABLY CARRIED OUT BY UNDP.

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III. "THE CANADIAN PAPER"

THE CANADIAN PAPER PROVIDES AN INTERESTING AND USEFUL TOOL FOR ANALYSING FAO BUDGETS. SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS PARALLEL WORK CARRIED OUT BY OUR OWN WORKING GROUP ON FAO FINANCE EARLIER THIS YEAR.

THE GENEVA GROUP (ROME) WORKING GROUP ON FINANCE HAS COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS:

"AMONG POINTS RAISED WAS THE EMPHASIS ON RECASTING WHICH IS NOT SO IMPORTANT IF THE FAO REALLY SHIFTS TO ZERO-BASE BUDGETING. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT THE POINTS ON INFLATION AND EXCHANGE RATE CHANGES HAD TO BE REQUIT- TEN TO BE MORE APPLICABLE TO THE ITALIAN SCENE. ONE MEMBER QUESTIONED THE IDEA OF PRODUCTIVITY INCREASES IN THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE FAO. FINALLY THE IDEA OF CONSISTENCY ON REAL PROGRAMME GROWTH AMONG SPECIALISED AGENCIES WAS QUESTIONED BECAUSE COUNTRIES SHOULD HAVE PRIORITIES AMONG THE WORK OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES."
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WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE CHECK LISTS ELABORATED AS A RESULT OF THE MEETINGS IN GENEVA OF 7-8 JULY. THE QUESTION OF DISCUSSING WITH FAO STAFF THE APPLICABILITY OF THE "CANADIAN PAPER" TO FAO BUDGET ANALYSIS HAS TO BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S WORKING METHODS. THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL FIRMLY INTENDS TO KEEP ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBER COUNTRIES ON THESE MATTERS UNDER HIS OWN FIRM CONTROL. IT WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL TO APPROACH THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL PWB, OR ANY OF HIS JUNIORS, FOR THE KIND OF DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN GENEVA. IN OUR VIEW, THE BEST USE THE GENEVA GROUP (ROME)

CAN MAKE OF THE METHODOLOGY DESCRIBED IN THE CANADIAN PAPER IS TO USE IT AS A TOOL TO FORMULATE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PWB WHICH SHOULD FIRST BE SENT IN WRITING AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION SO THAT THE ADG PWB IS ABLE TO LET THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL KNOW WHAT HE IS EXPECTED TO ANSWER.

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF THE 32ND SESSION OF THE FAO PROGRAMME COMMITTEE (25 APRIL-6 MAY 1977):

"THE COMMITTEE ... AGREED WITH THE AIM OF CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF THE REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES SO AS TO ENSURE THE MOST EFFECTIVE USE OF THE REGULAR PROGRAMME FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MEMBER NATIONS. IT WELCOMED THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S INTENTION TO APPLY A ZERO-BASE RATHER THAN INCREMENTAL APPROACH - TO EXAMINE ACTIVITIES FROM THEIR STARTING POINT AND TO ELIMINATE INEFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES RATHER THAN TO CONSIDER ONLY THE MARGIN I.E. INCREASES OR DECREASES IN ACTIVITIES."

A START CAN BE MADE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME ON ASKING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL HOW HE PROPOSES TO DO THIS.

TAIL-PIECE

WE REGRET THE GENEVA GROUP (ROME) HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE EARLIER TO THE DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES. MOST OF ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED FULL-TIME IN FAO AND OTHER MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD APRIL TO JUNE WHICH HAS LEFT NO TIME FOR STUDY OF THE MORE GENERAL PROBLEMS PRESENTED. END OF QUOTE HOLMES

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